INTEMPERANCE.

BY DEWIT TALMAGE.

"Awake, ye drunkards and weep and howl ye drinkers of wine!"

THE FIRST DRUNKARD.

Noah, the shipbuilder, said Dr. Talmage, did the best thing and worst thing for the world. He built an ark against a deluge of water but introduced a deluge against which the world has ever since been trying to build an ark—a deluge of drunkenness. We hear his staggering step in the opening chapters of Genesis. Shem and Japeth tried to cover him up. But there he is, drunk on wine at a time in the history of the world when, to say the least, there was no lack of water. Inebriation, once introduced into Bible times, never retreated. Abigail, the fair and heroic wife, goes home after saving the flocks of her husband Nabal from confiscation by invaders and finds him too drunk that night to tell him about his narrow escape. Uriah came to see David and David got him drunk, and so paved the way for the despoliation of a household. Even the church bishops in Paul's time needed charging to be sober and not given to much drink, and so familiar was the swaying and falling movement of the inebriate that Isaiah, describing the final disolution of worlds says the earth shall real to and fro like a drunkard.

THE INTOXICANT OF THE ANCIENTS.

Ever since apples and grapes and wheat grew the world has been tempted to excessive stimulant. But the intoxicant of the ancients was an innocent beverage, a harmless soda-water, a feeble orangeade, a quiet syrup, compared to the liquids employed for modern inebriation, into which a madness, a fury, a fire, a gloom, a suicide, a retribution are mixed and melted. Fermentation was always known, but it was not until about one thousand years after Christ that distillation was invented. And while we have to confess to many of the ancient arts as lost, the Christian era surpasses all its predecessors in the bad eminence of whisky, gin, brandy and rum. The modern drunk is a hundred fold mightier than the ancient drunk. Noah's inebriation led him to imbecile behavior, but modern alcoholism sets its victum to struggling with menageries of hissing reptiles and jungles of growling tigers and perditions of blaspheming demons.

SATAN'S CONCOCTION.

An-arch fiend has landed in our world, and he has built an invisible caldron of temptation. He has made it staunch and strong, and he has filled it for all nations and all ages. First he squeezed into it the juice of the forbidden fruit of Paradise. Then he puts into it a distillation from all the harvest fields and orchards of the hemispheres; then adds to it it larger quantities of capsicum, copperas, molasses, logwood, deadly nightshade, assault and battery, vitriol, tobacco, sulphuric acid, opium, murder, pokeberry, cochineal, indigo, red carrots, potash, poverty and death and hops. But still it is a dry mixture, and so to moisten and liquiefy it he pours into it the tears of many centuries of orphanage and widowhood and the blood of 20,000 assassinations. Then he takes his great shovel, which he brought along with him from the nether world, the shovel once used for filling the furnances beneath. And now he begins to stir the great caldron, and as he stirs it the awful liquiefaction begins to heave, and sputter, and boil, and hiss, and smoke, and men and women gather around this mammoth caldron with cups and pitchers, and kegs, and demijohns, and bottles, and all nations get their share.

SATAN'S JUBILEE.

And the arch-fiend laughs as he says: "Ha, ha! What a champion fiend am I! Who does more for coffins and graveyards, and shipwrecks, and prisons, and insane asylums and for populating the nether world than I do? When this caldron is empty I will fill it again and stir it again till the smoke of it joins the other smoke—the smoke of the torment that ascendeth forever and ever. Ha, ha! I drove 50 ships on the banks of Newfoundland and the Goodwins. I defeated the Northern armies at Fredericksburg. I slew five times as many Senators as will next winter assemble at the American Capitol, and five times as many Lords as will this season gather in the House of Peers. My festal cup is a bleached human skull, and all the upholstery of my palace is such a rich crimson, because it is dipped in human gore. The mosaics of my floor are the bones of children whose life drunken parents dashed out. My favorite music, sweeter than *Te Deum* or triumphal march, is the cry of daughters turned out at midnight on the street because father has got home from the carousal, and the seven-hundred-voiced shriek of a sunken steamer because the captain was not himself when he put the ship on the wrong course. Ha, ha! Let me thrust the shovel again into the caldron and stir it again and make it smoke again! Champion fiend am I! I have kindled more fires, wrung out more agonies, stretched out more midnight shadows, lifted more Golgothas, rolled more juggernauts, and damned more souls than any other of the brotherhood diabolic."

The ghastliest evil of America to-day is drunkenness; the immediate cause of it, the rum traffic. The two great political parties stand before it dumb. The Democratic party declares it unconstitutional and un-American to prohibit the evil, and the Republican party is too cowardly to touch it, lest they lose the German vote. If I never preach again, I will declare the whole counsel of God on this subject.

AN INCREASE OF DRUNKENNESS.

The first remark I have to make is that this evil is not subsiding—not on the stand-still, but on the forward march. Beginning close by, I remark that I have seen more drunken people in Brooklyn and New York within six weeks than I have seen in any year of my lifetime. There is in this country more liquor drank, and that of a worse kind, than since the first distillery began its devastation. Where there was one groggery there are five groggeries. Where there was one ruined home there are ten demolished. Where, according to Govermental figures, there were 23,000,000 gallons of beer sold in 1840, there were 551,000,000 gallon sold in 1883, and the 5,000,000 gallons of wine have become 25,000,900. Moreover, notice that the evil is as thoroughly organized as ever was an army, with commander-in-chief and staff officers, and infantry, and calvary, and batteries and advanced guards, and standards. And every man who hereafter runs for office will be compelled to commit himself either as the friend or foe of the liquor traffic.

THE LIQUOR DEALERS.

I hold in my hand a circular of a brewers' association, which has been sent, or will be sent to every candidate for office. All the present nominees for the Presidency and Vice Presidency have already received it. Its first resolution reads as follows:

"Resolved, That, as members of a craft which in all enlightened countries is considered a needful and beneficial branch of industry, and one which contributes to the force and vigor of mankind by producing a cheering and nourishing drink-food, we recognize the dignity and usefulness of our calling, and are desirous of confirming it still more in the good esteem of the intelligent, the wise, and the humane."

In this circular the candidate for office is called upon to fill a blank declaring himself friendly to the liquor traffic. If he do not fill it aright and sign it, he is doomed so far as the brewers' association can doom him, and if he do not return the circular the silence is taken for a negative.

WHISKY AND POLITICS.

The evil of the time advances and the 15,000,000 church members in America will have to take sides in this conflict. It is going to be an out and out battle between rum and sobriety, between heaven and hell, between God and the devil. Better take sides before we have any further national decadence. Better take sides before your own sons are sacrificed or your daughter's new home goes down under the alcoholism of an embruted husband. Better take sides while your voice and vote and your pen may render an effectual service. The way the 15,000,000 male and female members of the American church conclude to throw their influence will decide our national destiny.

But reformers in both political parties say: "In national elections we only throw our vote away if we by that vote express our particular sentiments on the subject of inebriation." My reply is that no man ever throws his vote away if he vote aright, for every conscientious vote is not only an expression of opinion but a prayer to God, and the Lord makes record of it and will answer it in time to come, massing the separate snowflakes of individual suffrage into an an avalanche enough to crush all the allied powers of darkness. Besides that, your vote is for 1888 or 1892, and will not affect November, 1884, for this year the election will be swept by a majority such as has not been seen since the year when American politics sacrificed on its cruel alter my personal friend and grandest of American citizens, Horace Greely.

DRUNKARDS EVERYWHERE.

In speaking as I said I would in this brief course of Sabbath morning sermons about the things that threaten the destruction of American institutions, could I compass the subject without speaking of drunkenness? Is it a state evil or a national evil? Does it belong to the East or West, to the North or to the South? Alas me! There is not a river in America in which its tears do not flow and its suicides have not plunged. What ruined that Southern plantation, once its every field a fortune, the proprietor and his family a few years ago the most affluent guests of the summer watering places? What sent into decay that New England farm, the roseate cheeks that bloomed at the foot of the Green Mountains turned into the pallor of a drudge? What hath smitten every street of our town and city of this continent with more pestilence? What will on the first Tuesday in November in every state in the Union send thousands of men to the ballot box maudlin and incompetent and filthy and blasphemous? Strong drink. To prove that the evil is national I call up Maine of the North. Iowa of the West, and Georgia of the South. "Yes," says Maine, "it is so much of an evil that we have as a state, anathematised it." "Yes," says Iowa, "we have by constitutional amendment forbidden it." "Yes," says Georgia, "we have in 90 counties of our State made the sale of it a criminality."

TEMPTATIONS IN CITIES.

How many in all parts of the land are waiting to see if something is going to be done for their relief! First of all, tens of thousands of drunkards who cannot walk ten minutes in any direction in our cities without having the temptation glaring before their eyes or appealing to their nostrils, and they fighting against it with enfeebled will and diseased appetite, first conquering, then surrendering, conquering again and surrendering again, crying; "How long, O Lord, how long before these infernal solicitations shall be removed?" Mothers are waiting to see if something can be done; their boys, once with honest breaths, that breath now always disguised. Their eyes once clear, now filthy or bloodshot, the good hours they kept exchanged for a rattling of the night key long after the city watchman has gone by to see that everything is safely locked up. And the high expectation that the son would do something as artisan or merchant or professional man, and would be an honor to the family name long after the mother's wrinkled hands had been folded from her last toil—this expectation exchanged for a startled look at night when the doorbell rings lest something has happened, and the wish that the scarlet fever of 20 years ago had been fatal, for then he would have gone safely to the Savior's arms. But, poor old soul, she is left to see the truth of what Solomon said: "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

What a funeral it will make when that boy is carried home dead! She will say: "Is this the boy I used to sing to all night long when he was sick? Is this the boy I held to the altar of baptism? Is this the boy for whom I toiled till the blood came out of the tips of the fingers that he might have a good starting and a home? Lord, why hast thou kept me alive to see this? Surely these swollen hands are not the hands that used to wander over my face while I rocked him to sleep. Surely that bloated brow is not the one that I so rapturously kissed. Poor boy? How tired he looks! I wonder who struck him there on the temples. I wonder if he uttered a dying prayer. Wake up, my son! Can't you hear me? No! no! Dead! dead! dead!" "Oh Absalom, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee! Oh Absalom, my son, my son!"

DRUNKEN HUSBANDS.

I am not enough of a mathematician to estimate, is anybody here quick enough with figures to tell how many such mothers are waiting for something to be done for their relief. How many wives are waiting for domestic rescue? He promised something better than this when after long acquaintance and careful scrutiny of character the hand and heart had been offered and accepted. What hell on earth it is for a women who has a drunken husband! How lovely art thou, O Death, and how soft and warm thy skeleton hand if thou wouldst only come for her! The sepulcher on a winter midnight is a king's drawing room compared with what she now suffers. The blow on her head does not hurt her so much as the blow on her heart. The rum-fiend opened the door of that once beautiful home and said: "I curse this dwelling with unrelenting curse. I curse that husband into a maniac. I curse that wife into a pauper. I curse those sons into vagabonds. I curse those daughters into profligacy. Cursed be bread-tray and cradle and chair and couch and family Bible with its record of marriage and birth. Curse upon curse. Curse upon curse!" How many wives are waiting to see if something cannot be done to shake the frosts of this second death off the orange blossoms!

GOD IS WAITING.

Yea, God is waiting. the God who works through human instrumentalities and who gives every nation an opportunity, and if it is not improved He wipes it out of existence and lets another nation try. God is also waiting for the church, and if it do not do its work He will whip out the church, as he did the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Thyatira, the Church of Sardis. The Protestant and Roman Catholic churches to-day stand impotent before this great evil of intemperance. Why? Because men love their partisanship more than they love their God. They would rather have the Democratic or Republican party in authority at Washington than have drunkenness thrust off the doorstep of this nation. It seems they dare not move though God shows a clear path to victory over the mightiest evil of all the ages. What is the state of things this hour? We have an evil that costs the nation more than a billion dollars a year to support 350,000 criminals, 30,000 idiots, 800,000 paupers and bury 75,000 drunkards. Protagoras boasted that of his 60 years of life he had spent 40 in despoiling youth. The arch-fiend of the nations, Alcohol, can boast that all his years have been spent in that way, and without any exception.

HOW TO CONFRONT THE EVIL.

Now, what is being done to confront this evil? Take a lighted candle and put on your most powerful spectacles and look through the two great political platforms and find one word, if you can, deploring this evil. Something against Mormonism. Oh, yes, it is safe to denounce that organized nastiness 2,000 miles away. But not one word against drunkenness, which, if it go on, will turn this whole nation into a bestial Salt Lake City. Resolutions against political corruption. Oh, yes; but nothing against drunkenness, which, unarrested, will rot the nation from scalp to heel. Resolutions about protection against foreign competition, but not one word about protection of families and churches and nations against the evil which puts a scalding, blasting, all-consuming, damning tariff on all individual, financial, moral, religious, national interest. The Democratic party were in power most of the time for 50 years. What did they do as a party to arrest this evil? Nothing, absolutely nothing, appallingly nothing. The Republican party has been in power nearly a quarter of a century. What have they done to arrest this evil? Nothing, absolutely nothing, appallingly nothing.

I look in one more direction. The church is the mightiest, most magnificient organization ever known. Has it moved in solid phalanx on this question? No. Not long ago at a meeting of one of the great ecclesiastical bodies resolutions were offered demanding the arrest of this evil, and some ministers with wine in their cellars and on their tables defeated it by threatening speeches. They did not want to give up their own lusts. To-day—mark you, not in the millenium, but to-day—the church of God holds the balance of power and could extirpate this evil if it would march solidly to the front. Over three hundred thousand churches and Sunday schools in Christendom. What might they not do if they would march shoulder to shoulder for God and sobriety!

TO THE YOUNG MEN.

Young men of America, pass out into the ranks of teetotalism, Let whisky, good for preserving corpses, never turn you into a corpse. The thousands of young men, dragged to ruin by the devilish stuff, don't you touch it. On the front door of this church, summer before last, occurred this scene: A young man, coming in here to religious services. His friend, passing along the street, said: "Joe, come along with me to Coney Island and spend Sunday." "No," said the young man, "I am going in here to the services." "Oh pshaw," said the other, "come with. The day is bright and we shall have a glorious Sunday at Coney Island." Joe turned back and the twain spent the day at the beach drinking and carousing. In the evening coming up on the Bighton train Joe in his intoxication fell off the train and was crushed. The train stopped. As Joe was lying upon the grass and they were holding the lantern over him he said to his friend: "I am dying. I want you to tell the boys when you see them to-morrow that rum and Sabbath breaking did this, and when you are telling them I will be in hell, and it is your fault." Is it not time for me to pull out from this great organ of God's word with many banks of keys the stop tremolo: "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Yea, I pull out the trumpet stop of the text: "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep and howl ye drinkers of wine!"

The being that is master of himself bendeth events to his will, but a slave to selfish passions is the wavering creature of circumstances.